

The Office Action objected to Claim 4 and 24 other claims, because the claim language is not understood with respect to "write . . . to said data . . .".

Claims 1-100 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,550,957 (*Davidson Jr et al.*), in view of Japanese Patent JP-11-110143A (*Yoshiaki*).

First, cancellation of Claims 1-100 renders the objections and rejections of those claims moot.

The aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 101 is an office apparatus which can be connected to an external apparatus via a network. The office apparatus comprises reception control means for controlling a reception process of receiving agent information including a command train and data, control means for controlling a processing mechanism of the office apparatus by executing, based on the command train included in the received agent information, a control program that controls the processing mechanism, and memory management means for managing a memory area for executing the command train included in the received agent information. The office apparatus further comprises transmission control means for controlling, responsive to the control means terminating execution of the control program based on the command train, a transmission process of transmitting a process end notice to the external apparatus so as to cause a display unit of the external apparatus to display a process end confirmation window, obtainment means for obtaining a reply to the process end notice from the external apparatus, where the memory management means releases the memory area in response to the obtainment means obtaining the reply from the external apparatus.

Davidson Jr et al., as understood by Applicant, relates to multiple host computers on a network that are connected through an interface, or network adapter, to a

printer having a printer controller capable of bi-directional communication with the computers on the network. The interface communicates with the network computers in a manner to present a different virtual printer to each host computer. The interface notifies each interested host computer concerning types of printer status information to which changes have occurred; and the host computers communicate requests for more detailed information. Apparently, *Davidson Jr et al.* teaches that commands and data are transmitted in packets and that the commands are executed in office apparatuses. Nothing has been found in *Davidson Jr et al.* that teaches or suggests transmission control means for controlling, responsive to the control means terminating execution of the control program based on the command train, a transmission process of transmitting a process end notice to the external apparatus so as to cause a display unit of the external apparatus to display a process end confirmation window, obtainment means for obtaining a reply to the process end notice from the external apparatus, or memory management means that releases the memory area in response to the obtainment means obtaining the reply from the external apparatus. The agent of the present invention of Claim 101 controls reservation or release of the memory area used by the agent, either directly or indirectly.

Yoshiaki, as understood by Applicant, merely teaches technical concepts of sending print agents to the printer for printing and deleting them after the printing is completed and of retaining standby agents until the execution of them is started. Nothing has been found in *Yoshiaki* that teaches or suggests memory management means of Claim 101.

Applicant submits that a combination of *Davidson Jr et al.* and *Yoshiaki*, assuming such combination would even be permissible, would fail to teach or suggest the transmission control means, obtainment means and memory management means of Claim

101. Further, *Davidson Jr et al.* and *Yoshiaki* do not have the technical advantages of Claim 101, in that the memory can be effectively used in office apparatuses which usually have a limited amount of memory resource.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claim 101 is patentable over the cited art.

Independent Claims 110, 112, 121, and 123 are system, method, computer program product, and computer-readable memory medium claims respectively corresponding to apparatus Claim 101, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 101.

The aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 104 is an office apparatus which can be connected to a network. The office apparatus comprises reception control means for controlling a reception process of receiving agent information including a command train in which a work flow is programmed describing a series of processes to be executed in a plurality of office apparatuses, control means for controlling a processing mechanism of the office apparatus by executing, based on the command train included in the received agent information, a control program that controls the processing mechanism, execution means for executing one of the series of processes described in the work flow to be executed in the office apparatus, and transmission control means for controlling, responsive to the execution means terminating execution of the one process, a transmission process of automatically transmitting the agent information to an external office apparatus so as to cause the external apparatus to execute the command train based on the work flow. By virtue of this arrangement, programming, by means of a work flow, a series of office processes, such as printing an image and filing the printed image, is effective.

Davidson Jr et al. merely gives a list of commands executable in printers, but fails to teach or suggest using a work flow that can program a plurality of units of processes to be executed in office apparatuses, so as to automate these processes.

Yoshiaki, apparently discloses a print job agent 25d comprising print data 35, print control module 37 that sends a message when the printing has been successfully terminated, error handler 39 that sends an error message when an error has occurred, and print monitor 41 that monitors the printer and informs the error handler 39 of the status, as needed (See Fig. 4). The print job agent 25d is sent from the host to the printer. The *Yoshiaki* structure corresponds to a routine for one unit of print process, and does not entail programming of a plurality of units of print processes to be executed in a plurality of office apparatuses. Therefore, nothing has been found in *Yoshiaki* that teaches or suggests the concept of "work flow" of the present invention, as recited in Claim 104.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claim 104 is patentable over the cited art.

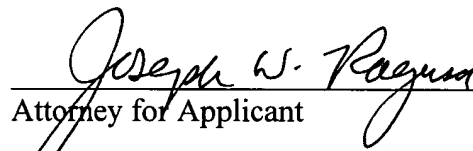
Independent Claims 111, 115, 122, and 124 are system, method, computer program product, and computer-readable memory medium claims respectively corresponding to apparatus Claim 104, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 104.

The other claims in this application depend from one or another of the independent claims discussed above, and, therefore, are submitted to be patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual consideration of the patentability of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO CLAIMS

Claims 1-100 have been canceled.

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